



# Our Shared Future

A collaboration between the University of Bath and  
Bath and North East Somerset Council

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# Background

Our Shared Future was launched as a collaboration between the University of Bath and Bath and North East Somerset Council in January 2020. Four themes of interest were identified:

- Decarbonisation of the built environment
- Transport and travel
- Development of infrastructure
- Development of a cohesive and inclusive city (potential change to Health and Wellbeing).

Initially progress on these themes was delayed by the lockdown of the country as a result of Covid-19, and the pressures on both of the partner institutions to respond to pressing core business needs to adapt to working in a new way. However, the newly established relationship between both organisations allowed closer partnership working on a collective Covid response.

Following the first lockdowns there was a need to assess whether the four previously identified themes remain central to both organisation's objectives following the impacts of Covid-19 and lockdowns.

# Project charter

## Business case

A joint initiative with B&NES Council aiming 'to grow our collective problem-solving capacity by bringing together expertise from across the city', contributing to our local engagement strategy goal of being an outstanding partner for local government.

## Objective

Create a working structure between B&NES and the University within which a portfolio of collaborative research and student projects can take place, and support the development of these projects in their infancy.

## Main deliverables

- A framework within which UoB/B&NES collaborative research can be carried out
- A support system to ensure that collaborations between the two organisations can progress
- A self-perpetuating programme of collaborative research and student work

## Roles and responsibilities

- A project manager to lead the programme of work
- A steering group to advise on project development and contribute to monitoring of progress
- A body of researchers as is relevant to the collaborations that form

## Stakeholders

- Key stakeholders include:
- Leadership and staff/students of B&NES and UoB
  - Local organisations
  - Local community
  - Funding bodies
  - Heritage sites globally

## Assumptions

For work to progress between the two organisations access to external research funding will have to be secured. Academic research time will be prioritised to deliver on research in collaboration with B&NES.

# Requirements

An outline of what each organisation wants to gain from this project.

The University of Bath wants to foster a stronger working relationship with local stakeholders, and a research collaboration with the Council will help to achieve this. Increasing our civic role is a core focus of its Local Engagement Strategy, and essential to the delivery of a Civic University Agreement. The University also wishes to demonstrate strong Knowledge Exchange, which an effective local government research relationship will contribute towards. The University also wishes to further its research within three core 'beacons'; Digital, Sustainability, and Health & Wellbeing.

Bath and North East Somerset Council wishes to deliver on its 2020 - 2024 corporate strategy, with the overriding objective of improving the lives of those living in the district. Within this, the strategy identifies two core objectives - to tackle the climate and nature emergency, and giving people a bigger say in Council decision making. To do this, the Council wishes to prepare for the future, deliver for local residents, and focus on prevention.

Through this project both organisations want to create a structure and framework through which ongoing programmes of collaborative exploration can take place that further both organisations core strategic objectives.

# Scope statement

## Project justification

Since Covid-19 changed the direction of both organisations focus for 2020, Our Shared Future is required to re-establish objectives and create the groundwork for future research and student project collaborations to take place.

## Project scope

The development of a collaboration framework (data sharing agreements, steering board, advisory groups etc) and the establishment and delivery of research and student project collaboration is within scope of this project.

Exclusion: other conversations and collaborations with B&NES, i.e. economic recovery board, planning.

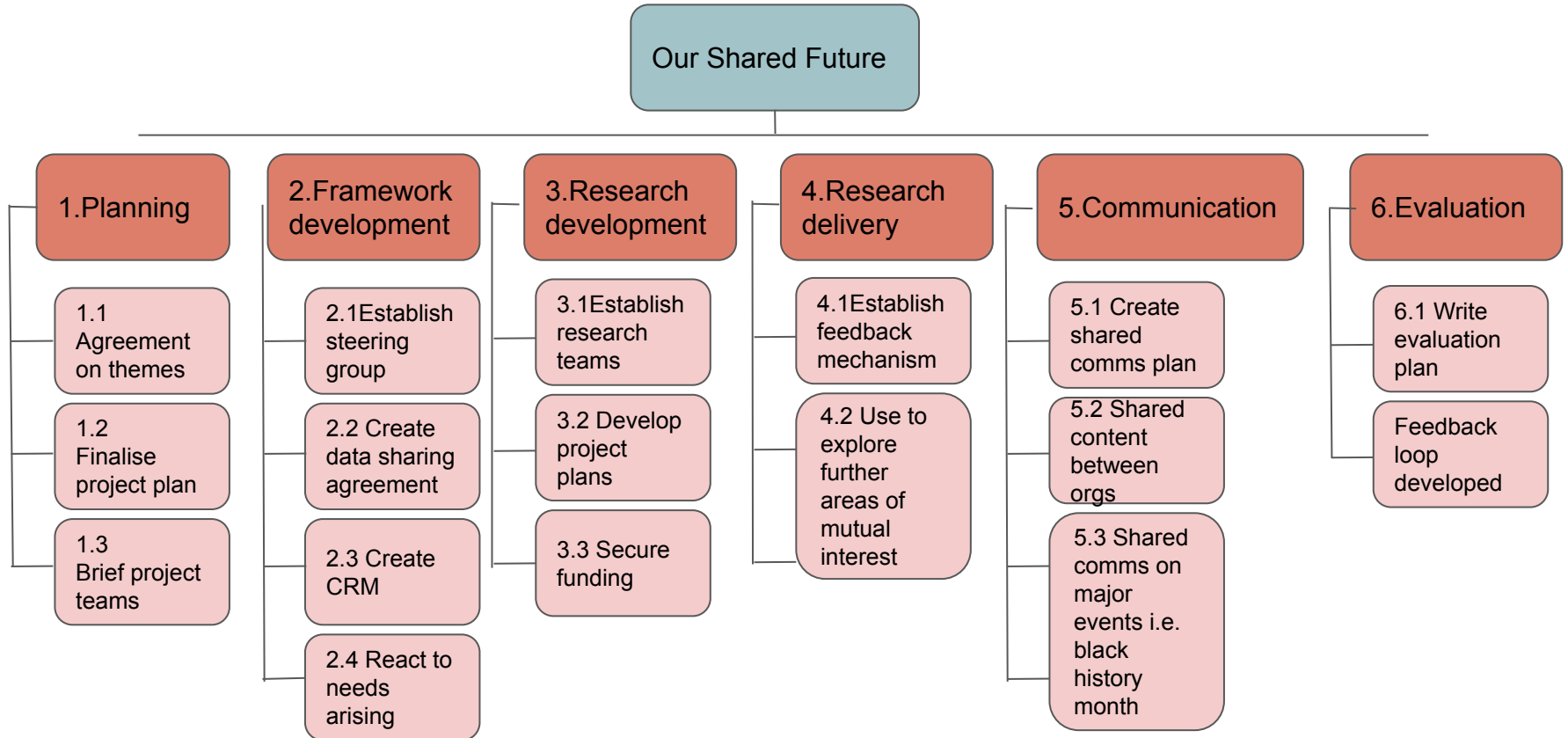
## Project deliverables

- Agreement on themes of mutual exploration
- A framework in which research collaborations or student projects can be developed between the council and the university.
- Relevant documentation and agreements to allow collaborative work (ie data sharing agreement)
- Four initial collaborations (one in each theme)

## Project success criteria

- Establishment of regular and effective communication between B&NES and UoB regarding collaborative exploration
- Securing funding and delivering against projects within each of the agreed themes
- Positive feedback from key stakeholders in each institution

# Work breakdown structure



# Research projects

Within the four themes originally agreed with B&NES four initial research programmes were developed. As a result of Covid-19 it was decided that social cohesion should be temporarily replaced with a focus on the green environment and access to green spaces. Today, over 20 projects have taken place.

- Decarbonisation of the built environment. QR funding was secured to set up a 'Decarbonisation Taskforce', and a Vertically Integrated Project (student-led) was established to resource work coming out of the taskforce. Funding is now being sought to develop this into a longer-term project focused on decarbonising heritage sites around the world.
- Transport and travel: this is a student-led Vertically Integrated Project which has assessed the value and risk to introducing scooters to the city, and is now looking at other transport related issues.
- Health and wellbeing: a programme of research has been delivered evaluating and advising on the progression of work carried out by the B&NES Compassionate Communities Hub. This is now being extended with additional funding to look at social prescribing and wider community health and wellbeing issues.
- Green spaces: a member of the UoB team is sitting on the steering group of a major rural green space and health project with B&NES, and a student-led Vertically Integrated Project has been launched to look at green space equity among social groups.

# Budget

The main cost of this project is in staff time. Other significant costs are covered by research funding grants or are addressed with specific business plans.

Predicted costs:

- CRM license to manage contacts made through the project.
- Delivery of communications. To reach targeted audiences across our region, there is a need to invest in sponsored social media and digital marketing.
- Funding student placement years should these be identified to deliver in any of the themes.
- Evaluation. There may be some small costs for the transcription of research interviews or the conducting of surveys.
- Responding to needs arising. If research teams discover new challenges in undertaking an effective working relationship between the University and the Council then addressing these will need to be costed independently.



# Risk

The largest risk to this project is the unpredictable nature of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the impact this has on the priorities of both organisations. The progress of this project relies heavily on the availability of key personnel from B&NES, both to support overall project delivery and to participate within research programmes. Should this be delayed, there will be a delay to the delivery of the project.

To carry out meaningful work in collaboration, research needs to be funded. Funding for place-based research is currently very limited and might become more so following the pandemic, placing the progress of the project at risk.

## Other risks:

- Insufficient academic time
- Lack of prioritisation of OSF by both organisations
- Fast paced political environment could change organisational objectives

# Links

University of Bath Civic Engagement Blog: <https://blogs.bath.ac.uk/civic-engagement/>

Our Shared Future launch announcement:

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/announcements/university-of-bath-and-b-nes-council-launch-our-shared-future/>

One year update on Our Shared Future:

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/announcements/one-year-on-collaborations-progress-apace-for-our-shared-future/>

VC Ian White speaks about Our Shared Future:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zryLF2Pdx7U>